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The reading interests of a sixth-grade class of 12 Amish and 23 non-Amish children in a rural school in northern Indiana were compared to determine the impact of home environment and the mass media on children's reading interests. Data gathered through questionnaires and records of books read within a period of 4 weeks showed that reading ranked highest as a leisure time activity among the Amish children and non-Amish girls. Television viewing was a first choice for the non-Amish boys and a second choice for the non-Amish girls. On the average, a greater number of books was read by the Amish children. Hobbies were not mentioned as leisure time interests by the Amish children. Amish boys preferred animal and sport stories; Amish girls chose biographies and family and home stories. The non-Amish children read in more interest areas and favored mysteries, biographies, and stories of other lands and people. These results point out the strong influence of a strict religious home environment on children's recreational activities and interests. (NS)

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE READING INTERESTS OF AMISH AND ENGLISH SIXTH GRADERS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the reading interests of a sixth grade class to see if students coming from a strict religious background have different reading interests from classmates who do not come from a strict religious background.

Hypothesis

The researcher of this study believes that today's mass media of communication and the home environment as well as other factors such as the availability of books, the school and community situation, and age and sex have an impact on children's reading interests.

School Situation

This study was conducted in a selected rural community school in Northern Indiana. The class consisted of twenty boys and fifteen girls. Twelve of these students, seven boys and five girls, were from Amish homes. The non-Amish students, thirteen boys and ten girls, typify members of the average rural American family which has modern conveniences, such as electrical appliances,

modern machinery, and the automobile which serves as a major means of transportation.

Background to the Amish

> The Amish are a people of seclusion. By intent and tradition they live withdrawn from the concourse of the world. They have not gone forth to reform American ways; on the contrary, it has been their tenacity in holding still that has provoked conflict with modern society.[1]

Among the Amish, the home, which is noted for its stability and contentment of its members, is the most important social unit. The importance of hard work and co-operation are learned early in life as the tasks of homemaking and farming have not been lightened by electrical appliances and modern farm machinery. The mode of transportation for the Amish is the same today as it was one hundred years ago, namely, horse and buggy. Why do they still use buggies?

> They have retained it (the horse and buggy), like many other things, on the principle that "the old is the best." To accept the automobile would lead to a breakdown of their community life and would open the floodgates of social and cultural change. The limitations of the horse and buggy keep the social life of the family in bounds.[2]

According to Hostetler, there are three predominant

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[1]Schreiber, W., Our Amish Neighbors, p. 73.

[2]Hostetler, J.A., Amish Life, p. 50.

values in the Amish faith: (1) a devout religion, (2) an agrarian way of life, and (3) a cohesive family and community.[3] In the Amish community the members speak the Pennsylvania "Dutch" dialect but use the English language when intermingling with those outside their own group. Likewise, they use English in writing because their dialect has not been reduced to writing.[4]

In regard to education, the Amish want their children to get the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although many of the Amish children attend the public schools, nevertheless, there are also a number who attend their own private schools. Nearly all Amish children quit school at the age of sixteen or after the completion of the ninth grade. "Amish parents are undoubtedly right in sensing the danger of the modern community life. Should their children attend, they would probably no longer want to be either farmers or Amish."[5] In essense, they feel that this limited amount of education is sufficient for their way of life.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study were a reading

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[3] Ibid., p. 5.

[4] Ibid., p. 18.

[5] Ibid., p. 31.

inventory questionnaire and a short form for recording the books read, either partially or in full. (See Appendix A and B for the forms used).

Methods and Procedures Used

The classroom teacher, who carried out this study, asked his students to fill in one of the report forms for every book that was read in a period of four weeks. With the aid of the school librarian and the class, the books were categorized to make comparisons in this study. The reading interest categories used in this study were taken from Children and Books and Children's Literature in the Elementary School.

In this study, there will be comparisons between the Amish and the English boys, the Amish and the English girls, and the Amish and the English as a whole. From here on in this paper, the non-Amish students will be referred to as English, which is the term used by the Amish people in reference to persons not belonging to the Amish faith.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Hurlock has defined an interest as

> a learned motive which drives the individual to act in accordance with that interest. It is defined as preoccupation with an activity when the individual is free to choose. When the child finds an activity satisfying, it continues to be an interest.[6]

Reading interests are closely related to the child's other interests because he is the kind of child he is and reading can contribute to his other interests. Since children are unique individuals, they do not all like the same things. Too often adults expect children's interests to be in harmony with what interests them. An interesting point is made by Fenner in regard to individual preferences:

> It would be nice if all these lovely children loved the lovely books. Life would be simple! But they don't. I think maybe we should be grateful that children are different. . . Wouldn't life be a bore if everyone liked just what we like?[7]

Although the number of research studies to determine children's reading interests have somewhat waned since the 1920's and 1930's when many such studies were

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[6]Hurlock, E.B., Child Development, p. 275.

[7]Fenner, P., The Proof of the Pudding - What Children Read, p. 11.

carried out, nevertheless, educators and parents are concerned with the problems of arousing and guiding children's interests. The search for books which appeal and new approaches to stimulate more or better reading are constantly being sought. Educators and parents are also concerned about the effects of the mass media upon the development of reading tastes. Television in particular, in addition to radio and comics, competes strongly for the pupil's leisure time. While some writers insist that the mass media supplant reading interests, others mention that children are reading more today than before. One point on which most agree, however, is the fact that these mass media make the task of motivating reading interests much more complex than previous to these appealing devices.[8]

The eminence of reading among various leisure time interests shows definite trends according to such studies as the one by Gray. At the elementary level, reading is frequently found to be one of the strongest interests of children.[9] What are the factors affecting reading interests?

In Children Learn to Read Russell gives three factors which affect the reading interests of children.[10]

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[8]Spache, G.D., Toward Better Reading, pp. 166-174.

[9]Tooze, R., Your Children Want to Read, p. 167.

[10]Russell, D.H., Children Learn to Read, pp. 267-270.

The first factor deals with the inherent factors in the child. Age and sex differences bring a divergence in reading interests as children mature. Lazar's study of over 2,000 children in New York City Schools revealed that with advancing age, boys turn to realistic narratives of adventure, while girls continue to favor themes of home life and begin to read romantic stories.[11] In 1955 Taylor and Schneider also found a significant difference between boys and girls and their subject interests. The major interest of boys was adventure, followed closely by sports; whereas, girls chose stories classified as "Teen-age and Romance" more frequently than any other category.[12] Huck and Young state that "the culture decrees interests in terms of sex roles. Girls may be interested in dolls but are not expected to express interest in mechanics."[13] On the other hand, as Tooze points out, while boys do not read the so-called "girls'books," girls read "boys' books" as well as the "girls' books."[14] The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is an

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[11]Lazar, M., Reading Interests, Activities and Opportunities of Bright, Average, and Dull Children, Contributions to Education, No. 707, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937.

[12]Taylor, M.W. and Schneider, M.A., "What Books Are Our Children Reading?", Chicago Schools Journal, Vol. 38 (January-February 1957), pp. 155-160.

[13]Huck, C.S. and Young, D.A., Children's Literature in the Elementary School, p. 6.

[14]Tooze, op. cit., p. 87

example of a so-called "boys' book" which is enjoyed by boys and girls alike.

Intelligence is another inherent factor which affects reading interests. Both Veatch and Spache point out that the interests of the bright, average, and dull child are fairly similar. However, bright children tend to read more than dull children and the quantity read by dull boys seems related to their limited intelligence more so than among dull girls.[15] In regard to intelligence and interests, Zimet says,

> The relationship between intelligence and interests have been investigated by Thorndike and Wolfson. Both investigators report no significant coefficients of correlation. Rather, age and maturity seem to exert a greater influence. As the child matures, the rate of change of interest gradually diminishes; the more mature the child, the broader and deeper his range of interests.[16]

A second factor Russell mentions is the kind of reading material which is available to the child. If given a wide variety from which to choose, children will browse through a book to check its content and degree of difficulty. Some children, especially at the ages from ten to twelve, will stick to a series of books if available. Sue Barton, Nancy Drew, The Hardy Boys, and

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[15] Spache, op. cit., p. 168.

[16] Zimet, S.F., "Children's Interest and Story Preference: A Critical Review of Literature," The Elementary School Journal, (December 1966), p. 127.

Tarzan are some of the well-known favorites.

A third factor, according to Russell, is the child's immediate environment. If there are no books available in the immediate surroundings, the child will have trouble developing reading interests. The child who does not know books from his experience will certainly not pick up just any book and begin to read it with great interest. He must have the recommendation and encouragement of others. In an article by Kadson, the author states that family reading habits and attitudes toward reading significantly influence children's reading interests. Thus, the development of reading interests is modified not only by the school but also by the educational standards of the home and community.[17]

Huck and Young point out that children display interests in areas which

> bring approval through conformity to social expectations. . . Interests become a part of personality through the process of identification. The child who observes the enthusiasm of parents and teachers for reading may emulate this behavior as he seeks their approval.[18]

"Interests," says Dr. Strickland,"expand and

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[17] Kadson, L.M., "Early Reading Background of Some Superior Readers Among College Freshmen," Journal of Educational Research, Vol.52 (December 1958), pp. 151-153.

[18] Ibid., p. 7.

grow when there is opportunity to live with them and material for them to feed on. . . Interests do not grow in a vacuum. They are stimulated by experience."[19]

In the last decade science has been influential in creating new reading interests. Families travel more today than ever before. The American population has become more mobile due to such factors as changes in transportation and communication. Television also has an impact on children's reading. "It brings people and places, stories, and news that can stimulate interest in reading or that can blunt the desire to read."[20]

Now that the factors affecting reading interests have been discussed, what does research reveal about children's interests? The studies by Herbert Rudman and the one by George Norvell revealed that children have similar reading interests regardless of where they live-- city, suburbs, or country-- and that there are really few significant differences between the reading interests of boys and girls. Rudman concluded from his findings that children as a group choose mystery, adventure, children,

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[19] Strickland, R., "Making the Most of Children's Interests in the Teaching of Reading," Reading Teacher, Vol. 10, (February 1957), p. 137.

[20] Mackintosh, H.K., Children's Interests in Literature and the Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, Vol. 10, (February 1957), p. 139.

horses, and dogs to read about.[21] Studies by Witty and others have found that animal stories, adventure, books with humor in the narration, stories of real boys and girls, and books about children in other lands are favorites of children in the intermediate grades.[22] A study by S.M. Amatora and S.M. Edith of 343 boys and 381 girls in grades two through eight showed the reading interests of sixth grade boys and girls shown in the tables below. (Only grades four to six are included for purposes of this study).[23]

In this study shifts to new interests are definite from grades four to five and six. Most noticeable is less interest in stories of children and an increase in adventure stories. This, agreeing with Witty's study, illustrates the development of hero worship up to the age of ten or twelve.[24] Boys in the intermediate grades also show an increasing interest in science and invention and a decreasing interest in nature stories whereas girls read an increasing proportion of romance, family life,

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[21] Rudman, "The Informational Needs and Reading Interests of Children in Grades IV Through VII," The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 55, (May 1958), pp. 502-512.

[22] Huck and Young, op. cit., p. 7.

[23] Amatora, S.M. and Edith, S.M., "Children's Interests in Free Reading, School and Society, Vol. 73, No. 1889 (March 3, 1951), p. 136.

[24] Ibid., p. 136.

and adult literature.[25]

And lastly, it should be pointed out that among the studies of children's reading interests, none were found which concentrated on a strict religious group such as the Amish. Rather, the studies were carried out among rather large populations of children from various localities throughout the country.

PERCENTAGE OF BOOKS READ IN EACH INTEREST CATEGORY AT EACH GRADE LEVEL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

	Boys			Girls		
	Grades					
	4	5	6	4	5	6
Religion	.09	.03	.00	.07	.03	.08
Poetry	.00	.00	.00	.06	.01	.01
Animals	.17	.03	.05	.14	.06	.03
Children	.27	.33	.40	.34	.49	.52
People	.04	.00	.02	.02	.04	.03
Fairy Tales	.12	.03	.02	.11	.04	.03
Travel	.03	.00	.02	.07	.01	.05
Nat. & Sc.	.10	.03	.02	.07	.07	.04
History	.09	.05	.00	.06	.03	.08
Adventure	.09	.50	.47	.06	.22	.13

[25]Spache, op. cit., p. 166.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In a study by Mauch and Swenson, the authors found that reading ranked fourth among recreational interests, whereas responses given by the students involved in this study showed that reading ranked the highest as a leisure time interest among the Amish children and the English girls. Among the English boys, television was listed most frequently and was the second choice of English girls as a leisure time interest.

TABLE 1. WHAT I USUALLY DO DURING MY SPARE TIME

	English		Amish	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Watch Television	41.7	30.0	0.0	0.0
Read	0.0	50.0	71.4	80.0
Sports and Games	33.3	0.0	0.0	20.0
Hobbies	8.3	20.0	0.0	0.0
Other	16.7	0.0	28.6	0.0

Because television is taboo in the Amish society, it is quite understandable that watching television was not listed by Amish students as a spare time activity, but it was quite surprising that sports were not mentioned by Amish boys who enjoy participating in sports

activities both at home and at school. This may be due to the fact that they have many farm chores to do in the evening and there is little time for playing ball while it is yet daylight, or playing ball might have been mentioned if the question had been "what I prefer to do during my spare time" rather than "what I usually do during my spare time." Other activities mentioned by the Amish students were "driving my calf" and sleeping. From Table 1 it is also evident that hobbies are among the leisure time interests of English children but are not mentioned by the Amish children.

From the responses given on the questionnaire, it is quite noticeable that the types of books preferred by Amish children are within a narrower range than those of the English children.

Table 2 reveals that the first choices of the types of books preferred fall within two categories for Amish boys and two for Amish girls. While Amish boys prefer reading about animals and sports, Amish girls list biography and mystery as their choices. However, in listing their second choices, the responses given by the Amish children included the interest categories of fairy tales, other lands and people, and home and family. It is quite interesting to note that mystery was mentioned most frequently by English boys in both the first and second choices. Although biography was listed most often

among English girls as their first choice, this category was not mentioned by any of them as a second choice.

TABLE 2. FIRST AND SECOND CHOICES OF THE TYPES OF BOOKS PREFERRED EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

	English				Amish			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	First	Second	First	Second	First	Second	First	Second
Animals	15.4	23.1	20.0	20.0	71.4	0.0	0.0	20.0
Biography	7.7	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	20.0
Fairy Tales	7.7	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	20.0
Home and Family	0.0	7.7	10.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Humor and Fanciful	7.7	0.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mystery	38.4	38.4	20.0	10.0	0.0	28.6	40.0	20.0
Other Lands and People	0.0	7.7	10.0	10.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0
Our Country	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Poetry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Science	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports	15.4	15.4	0.0	0.0	28.6	42.8	0.0	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

In the early part of September and the latter part of March of the current school year, the students listed their favorite books by titles. Their responses are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. PERCENTAGE OF FAVORITE BOOKS IN EACH INTEREST CATEGORY AS EXPRESSED IN SEPTEMBER AND MARCH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

	English				Amish			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Sept.	March	Sept.	March	Sept.	March	*Sept.	March
Animals	41.7	15.4	40.0	20.0	83.3	57.1	0.0	0.0
Biography	8.3	7.7	20.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Fairy Tales	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home and Family	8.3	0.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	60.0
Humor and Fanciful	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0
Mystery	8.3	38.4	10.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Lands and People	0.0	15.4	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Our Country	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Poetry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Science	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports	16.7	15.4	0.0	0.0	16.7	42.9	0.0	0.0
Other	16.7	7.7	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0

*No response given by one student

Although books featuring animals were listed most frequently by the English boys and girls and Amish boys in September, fewer books were mentioned as favorites in this area in March by these same three groups. Among the English boys, books of other lands and people and mystery became more popular, whereas there was a slight increase in home and family type books among the girls. Although animal stories are most frequently mentioned by the Amish both in September and in March, more boys listed sports stories as their favorite books in March than in September. Biography books were the most frequently mentioned by Amish girls in September and home and family type books ranked highest in March among these girls.

When asked to "list the character in a book which I'd like to be for a day," here again animal characters followed by sports heroes rated highest among Amish boys and biography was the highest among the Amish girls. Responses by the English to this question were more diversified. Characters in mystery books were listed most often by both English boys and girls. Table 4 shows that English girls are the only ones to include characters in books of other lands and people whereas English boys are the only ones to include science fiction, adventure stories, explorers, and inventors. As it was pointed out earlier in this study, children at this age idolize

heroes. Babe Ruth was the sports hero chosen by several boys, and Helen Keller was among those chosen by the girls. Other famous persons chosen included Henry Ford and Daniel Boone.

The influence of television and motion pictures was most evident among English boys in listing their favorite books and characters.

One boy listed the following as his three favorite books: I Spy, Man from U.N.C.L.E., and Green Hornet. These have all made their appearance on television. Some of the other favorite characters of the English boys included Bugs Bunny, Woody Woodpecker, Green Hornet and Agent 007. All of these have appeared in motion pictures and/or on television.

TABLE 4. CHARACTER IN A BOOK WHICH I'D LIKE TO BE FOR ONE DAY EXPRESSED IN PERCENTAGES

	English		Amish	
	*Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Fiction:				
Animal	8.32	20.0	42.9	0.0
Home and Family	0.0	20.0	14.2	60.0
Mystery	25.0	30.0	0.0	20.0
Other Lands and People	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Science Fiction	8.32	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adventure	16.70	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports	8.32	0.0	0.0	0.0
Non-Fiction:				
Explorers	8.32	0.0	0.0	0.0
Famous People	0.0	10.0	0.0	20.0
Inventors	8.32	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports Heroes	16.70	0.0	42.9	0.0

*No response given by one student

Because the Amish listed reading more frequently as a leisure time activity, it would seem likely that they read more than the English children. Is this evident from this study? Ninety-five books were reported in this study and only seven were not completed. Table 5 shows that the average number of books reported by girls in both categories were the same and the average number completed is only slightly, though not significantly higher for the English girls. On the average the Amish boys completed twice as many books as the English boys.

It should be pointed out, however, that not all books were reported by the children during this study. This was evident because some of the students did not record the books which were reported as book reports at the time of this study. Although the students were occasionally reminded to fill in the report forms used for this study, some mentioned that they "forgot" to report them before returning the books to the library or bookmobile. Thus, one cannot be certain of the actual number of books read during this study but can rely only on those which were reported.

TABLE 5. AVERAGE NUMBER OF BOOKS REPORTED AND THE AVERAGE NUMBER COMPLETED PER PERSON DURING A PERIOD OF FOUR WEEKS

	English			Amish		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Books Reported	1.6	3.6	2.5	2.9	3.6	3.2
Books Completed	1.3	3.5	2.3	2.6	3.4	3.0

To recapitualate, Amish boys express preference for animal and sports stories and Amish girls prefer biography and home and family type books. English children, on the other hand, express a liking for books in more of the interest areas than do the Amish children. Now a question remains: "Do children read the types of books they say they are interested in?" Table 6 gives the percentage of books in each interest category reported during this study.

The books reported in this study confirm the expressed interests for animals stories by Amish boys and for biography and home and family type books by Amish girls. It is quite interesting to note that Amish girls were the only ones to express no interest in animal stories and they did not read any book in this interest area. Although it appears that Amish boys enjoy books of other lands and people, it should be pointed out that one-half of the books which they reported in this

category were not completed because the content of these books did not appeal to them. On the other hand, whereas a number of Amish boys expressed interest in sports books, none were read by them during this study.

Among the English children there were more mystery books read than in any other category. The second interest area among English boys was other lands and people and sports was third. Biography books were the second choice of those read by English girls and books in the interest category of other lands and people were third.

In figuring the percentage on the total books read by English boys and girls and Amish boys and girls, the largest number of books read fall in these three interest areas: English children chose mystery, biography, and other lands and people and Amish children chose biography, animal, and home and family books respectively.

From Table 6 it is also evident that English children chose books from a larger number of interest areas than did the Amish children. English children read books in the areas of science, our country, and sports, whereas the Amish children did not. Finally, neither group reported any books of fairy tales or poetry.

TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE OF BOOKS IN EACH INTEREST CATEGORY REPORTED DURING A PERIOD OF FOUR WEEKS

	English			Amish		
	Boys	Girls	*Total	Boys	Girls	*Total
Animals	9.5	8.3	8.8	55.0	0.0	28.9
Biography	9.5	22.2	17.5	5.0	61.1	31.6
Fairy Tales	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Home and Family	0.0	13.9	8.8	5.0	27.8	15.9
Humor and Fanciful	0.0	2.8	1.75	5.0	0.0	2.6
Mystery	28.6	36.1	33.3	5.0	11.1	7.9
Other Lands and People	23.8	8.3	14.0	20.0	0.0	10.5
Our Country	0.0	2.8	1.75	0.0	0.0	0.0
Poetry	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Science	9.5	0.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sports	14.3	0.0	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	4.8	5.6	5.3	5.0	0.0	2.6

*Percentage figured on total books reported by both boys and girls among the English and among the Amish.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

The hypothesis of this study stated that today's mass media of communication and the home environment have an impact on children's reading interests. Comparisons in this study were made between Amish children who come from a strict religious background and non-Amish or English children. The findings of this study were as follows:

1. The influence of television was most evident among English boys. It was most frequently mentioned as a leisure time activity among this group. In listing the "character of a book which I'd like to be for one day," English boys frequently mentioned characters who have appeared in motion pictures and television.

2. As a group, the average number of books read per child was greater among the Amish children.

3. Amish boys expressed preference for reading animal and sports stories. Over one-half of the books which they read during this study were animal stories, but no sports stories were read during the time of this study. Amish girls prefer biography and home and family type stories. These were also the major interest categories of the books reported by Amish girls. While Amish boys most often chose animal stories, Amish girls expressed no interest for books in this category and read no books in this category. The Amish as a group read the most books in the interest areas of biography, animal, and home and family.

4. English boys and girls showed a strong preference and read more mystery books than any other type. English children as a group read in more interest areas than did the Amish children. The English as a group read the most books in the areas of mystery, biography, and other lands and people.

Conclusions

In relation to the particular group studied, the following conclusion can be made: Children coming from a strict background in which a devout religion, an agrarian way of life, and a cohesive family are preeminent values, develop different reading interests from other children. The importance of an agrarian way of life may be reflected in the strong preference by Amish boys for animal stories, whereas the importance of homemaking may be reflected in the choice of home and family and biography books by Amish girls.

Limitations of this Study

1. The number of students in this study was too small and four weeks was an insufficient amount of time to formulate conclusions on the reading interests of Amish and non-Amish children.

2. Arrangements should have been made with the librarian to record all books which were checked out during the time of this study. This would have provided a check against students who forgot or did not care to report the books from the library that were read during this study.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Conduct a similar study for a longer period of time and include more students.

2. Compare the reading interests of Amish children from one locality with those from another locality.

3. Compare the reading interests of Amish children in a parochial school with those of Amish children in a public school.

4. Make a comparative study of the reading interests of the Amish children with those of children from another minority group such as the Hutterites.

5. Make arrangements with the librarian to record all books checked out by the children involved in the study.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Reading Inventory

Name_____

1. What do you usually do during your spare time?

   _____

2. List in order of preference three books which are your personal favorites.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. From the following list, select three types of books which you enjoy reading. List them in order of preference.

Animals	Other Lands and People
Biography	Our Country
Fairy Tales	Poetry
Home and Family	Science
Humor and Fanciful (Make Believe)	Sports
Mystery	Other

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. If you could be the character of a book for one day, whom would you choose to be?

   _____

5. In what book is he or she?

   _____

APPENDIX B

Book Report Form

Name_____

1. Title of Book_____
2. Did you complete the book? _____ yes _____ no
3. If you didn't, why not? _____
4. If you completed the book, what did you like about it?

   _____

5. Is there anything about the book which you didn't like?

   _____

   _____

APPENDIX C

What I Usually Do During My Spare Time

	English		Amish	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Watch Television	*5	3	0	0
Read	0	5	5	4
Sports & Games	4	0	0	1
Hobbies	1	2	0	0
Other	2	0	2	0

* = Number of responses

APPENDIX C

First and Second Choices of the Types of Books Preferred

	English				Amish			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
Animals	2	3	2	2	5	0	0	1
Biography	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	1
Fairy Tales	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Home & Family	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Humor & Fanciful	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Mystery	5	5	2	1	0	2	2	1
Other Lands & People	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Our Country	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poetry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sports	2	2	0	0	2	3	0	0
Other	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX C

Favorite Books

	English				Amish			
	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	*Sept.	March	Sept.	March	*Sept.	March	*Sept.	March
Animals	5	2	4	2	5	4	0	0
Biography	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1
Fairy Tales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Home & Family	1	0	2	3	0	0	3	3
Humor & Fanciful	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mystery	1	5	1	2	0	0	0	0
Other Lands & People	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Our Country	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poetry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sports	2	2	0	0	1	3	0	0
Other	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

* No response given by one

APPENDIX C

Character I'd Like to be for One Day

	English		Amish	
	*Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Fiction:				
Animal	1	2	3	0
Home & Family	0	2	1	3
Mystery	3	3	0	1
Other Lands & People	0	2	0	0
Science Fiction	1	0	0	0
Adventure	2	0	0	0
Sports	1	0	0	0
Non-fiction:				
Explorers	1	0	0	0
Famous People	0	1	0	1
Inventors	1	0	0	0
Sports Heroes	2	0	3	0

*No response given by one

APPENDIX C

Books Read

	English			Amish		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Animals	2	3	5	11	0	11
Biography	2	8	10	1	11	12
Fairy Tales	0	0	0	0	0	0
Home & Family	0	5	5	1	5	6
Humor & Fanciful	0	1	1	1	0	1
Mystery	6	13	19	1	2	3
Other Lands & People	5	3	8	4	0	4
Our Country	0	1	1	0	0	0
Poetry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science	2	0	2	0	0	0
Sports	3	0	3	0	0	0
Other	1/21	2/36	3/57	1/20	0/18	1/38